

WHOLE NO. 301

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING EPHEMERAL PUBLICATIONS.

BY LEMUEL O. OLINSTEAD.

Posterity delights in details.—John Quincy Adams.

What probably would a copy of the first handbill, almanac, newspaper, or theatre bill printed in New York, now bring put up at auction? Ei her of them would unquestionably bring more than the most expensive volume ever published in this city since, and yet there is nothing which annoys the tidy housewife more, who has a capital eye for dirt, and whose soul is disturbed by disorder, than a decent from the garret of one of grandpa's old almanacs, or the appearance of a stray number of an old Revolutionary paper, even when the intrinsic value of either, is worth more than its weight in gold. How many manuscript letters, old newspapers, pamphlets, and primers, although they may have been *dog-eared*, yet were relics and records of the heroic past, have been snatched up and hurried, as though they were evil spirits, into the fire. How many families have burned up what, if it had been sold, would have made them comfortable for life. There is a family in Connecticut, whose name I will forbear to mention, one of whose ancestors had held a high rank in the old French and Indian war, and afterwards in the army of the Revolution, who had carefully recorded in a journal, every thing which had occurred, and had preserved muster-rolls, orders of the day, handbills, newspapers, &c., to the amount of two or three barrels. These had been preserved with care by his son and transmitted to his grandson, who married a lady, who like many others of our fair countrywomen, could bear the sight of any thing better than old paper. She was greatly annoyed with the presence of these precious barrels in the attic; and from the first of her marriage, she could not and did not rest, until one day when her husband was absent she had her servants help bring them down and commit them and their contents to the flames. When her dear returned, she told him how much she had improved the garret, by burning the barrels and all the rubbish of the kind. It was news to her to learn, that the journals were the only records known from which it was expected to supply a long gap in the history of the French and Indian war, and which cannot now be supplied. The papers were judged to have been worth twenty-five thousand dollars.

Pamphlets on literature and science, philosophy and philology, genealogy, history, and statistics, which have been written with research, and which contain most important investigations and the results of long observations; and manuscript letters, diaries, and reports, which contain facts, dates, and events which often can be found nowhere else, are gathered from the garrets, committed to the flames, or ground up to make newspaper. Many a pamphlet, which was published for a few cents, and would now bring as many dollars, is in this way destroyed. Men of eminent literary and scientific attainments are daily searching for books, pamphlets, and papers which are considered worthless by many of our superficial ones. Many books, which are seldom read, are wanted to verify quotations and dates. The biographer and the historian want all the ephemeral pamphlets, newspapers, manuscript diaries and letters relating to the times and persons of which he writes. Who can estimate the value of a library which should contain a copy of all the directories of towns, which have been published in our country; of the almanacs, the newspapers, the pamphlets, and the school-books, and some of the handbills and show-bills of each year! It would, in some respects, be equal in value to that of the world-renowned Vatican library. There is not in our country a more unique and valuable collection of books, pamphlets, newspapers, handbills, &c., &c., than that of Colonel Peter Force, of Washington City. It is unique because it contains so much of an ephemeral character. It would be a much more serious matter to the country to lose it than to lose the library of Congress, because the one could be replaced, the other could not. To say nothing of directories, almanacs, newspapers, handbills, manuscript letters, diaries, &c., &c., a copy of every pamphlet which has been published in our country would be worth more than a copy of every work in book-form. Every family should preserve at least the pamphlets, the almanacs, and one good newspaper, which is the history of the time in which they live and the best one, anybody will ever see of that time. These well-selected, well-preserved, and well-read, would train a family to intelligence and saving habits; and when the parents have fulfilled their duty they would be a valuable legacy to their children. To a person who has occasion to consult these ephemeral publications, nothing is more sad, than to find how woefully they are destroyed, and how much ignorant vandalism we have among us.

Mr. J. L. Libbey in Harvard College, says: "That junk-dealers in the city, and tinnies in the country, collect wagon-loads of dead stock, old books, pamphlets, and papers; among which are many of great rarity and value, and sell them for a cent or two a pound to paper-makers, to be ground over and converted into paper-hangings."

"About a year ago, I saw in Boston, three large wagons, nearly filled with huge bags, just leaving a very humble auction-room, and from a few pamphlets, which a man was stuffing into the last bag, I rescued one which for nearly eleven years I had been trying to find, to assist me in completing the volume of a valuable periodical."

"I have known a journey to be made from New York to Cambridge, in a storm in January, mainly for the purpose of consulting an old funeral sermon, of which another copy could not be found in the country. It had probably never been asked for during the generations since it came to the library; but it was now wanted in a law case involving near half a million of dollars. How many would think a funeral sermon worth sending to the library of Harvard College?"

"From a remote part of Maine, journeys were repeatedly made to this vicinity, for information respecting land claims and mill privileges, and the parties found at last, by means of an old Boston directory, to which I called their attention, that for years they had probably been pursuing their inquiries on one of the most important points in the wrong direction. And yet the question is often asked, 'Of what use is an old directory?'"

"A family in a neighboring city, on vacating a house, sent a valuable donation; but, from an apprehension that a thorough glancing had not been made, a messenger was dispatched to the place, and he found in the barn, among papers which had been thrown there as worthless, several of the old, scarce Acts and *resolutions* of the State, other valuable documents, and a small unbound volume of which fruitless efforts had been made to obtain a copy for the library."

"From a closet, where they had probably remained nearly a century, we recently received tolerably complete files of the *Boston News Letter*, and of the *Evening Post*, for the years 1743, 1748, 1744, which contain a large amount of important information, nowhere else to be had; respecting Whitefield and the great revival, and the circumstances connected with the publication and statements of Prince's 'Christian History.'"

"In a neat butter-firkin of literary remains, sent to the library, at my special request, I found pamphlets, odd numbers of periodicals, enabling me to complete imperfect volumes, and a file of newspapers, which make a perfect copy of the first volume of the *Boston Gazette*, beginning in the year 1765, an important period in the history of the American colonies."

Col. Force also tells of some remarkable success in completing imperfect volumes and sets of works, by looking over barrels and boxes of old papers. And every man who has had any experience in antiquarian research, can tell of similar success.

If the old almanacs, sermons, newspapers, directories, reports, old books, manuscript letters, diaries, and pamphlets of every kind, could be gathered from the garrets, closets, old chests, trunks, and barrels, there would be many things brought to light, of which there is not known to be a copy in existence. After several years' search, I have obtained a complete set of the Annual Reports of the American Bible Society. Perhaps there are not a half dozen more complete sets in existence.

One word with regard to the manner of putting up pamphlets. It may be interesting to know, that some bind them in volumes, and have a general catalogue, as is done in the Library Company of Philadelphia. Others put them up entire in packages, according to the authors, putting on the back of the package the first three letters of their names. For example, those written by Smith, would have S.M.I. on the back of the package. This is the method in Harvard Library, and in the Athenaeum, in Boston. A third method is, to put them up by subjects, as is done by the British Museum. Each of these methods has its advantages, and by either, any thing desired, may be readily obtained. Either of these methods can be pursued in every private collection, and thus any pamphlet or paper may be readily found. Whichever method is adopted in putting up pamphlets, they should be preserved entire with the covers on, as originally issued.—*Historical Magazine*.

FROM THE EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL.  
LEARN TO WORK.

There are many in this age of the world who are trained up to think manual labor disreputable; and some of them too, within the sphere of our observation, of very limited means, living in dependence upon their friends, but month after month loiter about, without ever being seen with any implement of labor in their hands. It is a great evil of the times, and very injurious to the rising generation, to think it beneath their dignity to labor.

They have friends to support them, or they belong to a family that once stood high in the world. We speak not now of those who live by disreputable means, of whom there are some in almost every community. And let us suggest some considerations to show why the young should learn to work.

1. This was the lot of Adam and Eve even in Paradise. They were put there "to dress the garden and to keep it." A commentator says of this: "man even in a state of innocence and surrounded by all the external sources of happiness was not to pass his time in indolent repose. By the very constitution of his animal frame, exercise of some kind was absolutely essential to him, and a peculiar honor is put upon the pursuits of agriculture by their being appointed as the occupation of the head of the human race in his primeval state. Simple labor in the tillage of the earth was not a part of the curse incurred by transgression, but was the destiny of man from the first."

So the great poet makes Adam say:

"Man hath his daily work of body or of mind  
"Appointed, which declares his dignity  
"And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;  
"While other animals inactive range  
"And of their doings God takes no account."

2. We have the example too of the second Adam; who if not in the time of his public ministry, yet in all the early part of his life till thirty years old according to the common belief, worked at the trade of a carpenter. Here is certainly an example to dignify labor. The Son of God working with his own hands to support his mother and the family. Look at him with his hard hands, and earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, ye indolent youth, who must always wear your kid gloves to keep your hands soft, and are as much afraid of dirt as of a serpent. He not only taught men how to live morally and religiously, but to labor and practice economy.

3. Manual labor, and in the open air is necessary for health. For want of this, even though men may employ their minds and live by their wits, how sickly and puny multitudes are. Nature requires that they should exercise; and that not merely for the sake of exercise as an end; for it will do little good to think all the time, "I am doing this for my health." There must be something useful and beneficial to some one; something to interest the mind. The man who was compelled, by way of punishment to turn a grindstone, on which nothing was ground, said he would rather starve.

Labor to produce something at the same time that you promote your health and strength.

"Toil, and be strong. By toil the flaccid nerves  
Grow firm and gain a more compact tone;  
The greener juices are by toil subdued,  
Mellowed and subtilized; the rapid old  
Expelled, and all the rancor of the blood."

4. Though the young may inherit great estates, yet how often, by luxury, by intemperance, by knavery, by the providence of God, are these estates dissipated, and those who began life rich, are long before it ends left in poverty. And if they who are thus left, have never in early life learned to depend upon themselves, they are objects of pity. Poor, and too proud to work: we once knew a man of this kind, who descended very low in the scale of society, and then maimed one hand so as to disenable himself to work. We know a very wealthy man in the south-west, who has only two children, a son and a daughter, and he said he did not want his son to

know that he was wealthy. Habits of self reliance, of application to business, of industry, and economy are invaluable to the young. Though they are naturally averse to these, and a great theologian once said that laziness is a part of original sin.

5. "It is good for a man, that he bear the yoke in his youth;" is the language of the Bible.

Labor tends to curb the impetuous passions of youth, and to bring them into subjection to rightful authority. Where do we see disorders in families; disturbances in neighborhoods; rebellions in colleges, more than among those who have been raised to do nothing. It seems almost as if the very idea of authority, either of a parent, a teacher or of a magistrate, had vanished from the minds of the young; as well as respect for age in general, for which some of the ancient nations were so much noted.

It is one of the great sins of this age. And they who know better, but for their own wicked purposes encourage this spirit, know not what they do. A lady, who is a mother, and a step-mother, remarked lately, that she feared we should be visited with the judgments of God, on account of the prevalent disregard of parental authority.

6. Habits of labor will keep men out of the way of temptation. It is an old saying that "the devil always has something for idle hands to do;" and "an idle man's brain is the devil's workshop." A plenty to eat, and nothing to do made Sodom what it was. And the same effects will follow the same causes everywhere.

7. We have the examples of many who have prospered in business; risen to eminence, and filled high places in the world, who have learned to labor in their youth; who have known what toil and hardships were. While those who have been nurtured in the lap of ease have sunk, in general, into obscurity.

It may be sufficient to cite the case of our own Washington, whose name is as bright as any on the page of history.

"Almost from infancy his lot had been that of an orphan. No academy had welcomed him to its shades, no college crowned him with its honors: to read, to write, to cipher—these had been his degrees in knowledge. And now at sixteen years of age, in quest of an honest maintenance, encountering intolerable toil; cheered onward by being able to write to a schoolboy friend, 'Dear Richard, a doubloon is my constant gain every day, and sometimes six piteles;'—himself his own cook, having no spit but a forked stick, no plate but a large chip."

But he rose to be the first in war, the first in peace, the first in the hearts of his countrymen. Let the youth of our land look at his example.

EPHROS.

## ONE CHOSEN PURSUIT.

From all the teachings of history and experience, this lesson may be learned. Unless there be some one favorite pursuit on which the mind will dwell as in the precincts of its own home, to which it will cling day after day, and month after month, unless it can glow and kindle in its embrace; little that is good, little that is useful, little that is great can be accomplished.

But it may be said that this enthusiastic concentration will produce contraction and eccentricity of mind; that he who is absorbed by one subject will be a fool on all others. That indeed were a grievous penalty; but must it needs be incurred? Of course the concentration alluded to is not absolute but comparative. Proper recreation and other necessary duty must claim their place. The man who is accustomed to long continued, close and concentrated action on one subject will often accomplish more on others in the moments of its relaxation, than the mind ever can whose efforts are too much divided. While Newton and Dr. A. Smith were famous for their absence of mind, other men of enthusiastic devotion to one pursuit have been free from it. And others again have exhibited it who were far from being famous for concentration of powers. It is certainly a concomitant not to be sought for. And none need suppose that by affecting eccentricity of opinion by oddity of manners or negligence of dress, they can either acquire genius, or gain the reputation of possessing it. These at least, are obvious weaknesses requiring to be accompanied by other circumstances unequivocally marking out genius to make them tolerable. Without these other proofs they bring contempt and ridicule upon him who exhibits them. If it be the tendency of unity and consistency of purpose and concentration of mind, to produce eccentricity; still, at this cost, they are desirable. A thousand considerations demand them.

We have about us on every hand, wasted energies, ruined intellects, and miserable abortions in all departments of mental pursuit. Is it not too often the case that we have crude, complicated, and inconsistent laws, made worse by the manner in which they are administered? Do we not behold the vestal fire dying away on the altar of literature? Are there not in the land immortal spirits groping in spiritual darkness or wandering in the mazes of error, ready to precipitate themselves down the wild steep of infidelity, or to plunge into the abyss of despair, or else to be lulled into that false security from which they shall be aroused only by the dread tramp that wakes the dead? And is it not time that reform should be carried out, and that our writers, statesmen, and divines, men in all professions and pursuits, should oftener attain to the full stature of intellectual maturity? Who is he that has the strength of character, and energy of will, to throw aside the allurements and enticements that tend to draw him aside and to devote himself with consistency of purpose and with all the enthusiasm of his character to the prosecution of some one chosen pursuit, such as will call down the approving smiles of Heaven? For it must be remembered that the brightest chaplet that time can afford to adorn the brow of its heroes, will wither and die, if not watered by the dews and lighted by smiles from on high. Earth has fresh gay flowers in profusion, to weave garlands for the successful.

"But the trail of the serpent is over them all."

and they require to be washed in the "pure river of the water of life."

To him who will set himself to this duty the promised rewards are not small. His will be the calm consciousness of a faithful discharge of duty. His will be a life whose smooth course will stretch on amid the thickening trophies of his usefulness; the increasing regards of benefitted and grateful friends;

And "all those halcyon harmonies of fame,"  
"Which sound along the path of virtuous souls,"  
"Like music round a planet as it rolls."